

## CART RETURN CREDIT SYSTEM

### Abstract of the Disclosure

One aspect of the invention is directed to a system and method for providing an  
5 incentive to a customer of a store to return a shopping cart to a cart return location. The  
cart return location, such as a cart corral, has a plurality of detection loops at an entrance  
to the corral. The system detects a change in inductance of the loops when a cart is  
returned to the cart corral and generates a cart return signal, which is indicative of a  
returned cart, in response to the change of inductance. The system determines whether  
10 a cart is being removed from or returned to the cart corral by use of the multiple  
detection loops. Alternatively, a radio frequency identification system may be used to  
detect the return of a cart. The store customer may utilize a frequent shopper, loyalty or  
reward card to provide a customer identification code to the system. Alternatively,  
other interfaces, such as a keypad, are provided for receiving the customer identification  
15 code. The shopper is credited with points or credits in a frequent shopper or reward  
program for returning the shopping cart to the cart return location. Visual and/or  
audible feedback indicative of an action, for example credit given, may be provided to  
the customer. An optional output interface may be used as a back-up mechanism or to  
provide rewards. The cart return system, as disclosed may be readily configured to  
20 integrate with a wide range of existing, or new frequent shopper or loyalty programs.

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